

Small Wood
S E R M O N,

OCCASIONED BY

The Death

OF THE LATE

CAPT. W E B B;

And Preached at

PORTLAND-CHAPEL, BRISTOL,

DECEMBER 24, 1796,

At the Time of his Interment.

BY JOHN PRITCHARD.

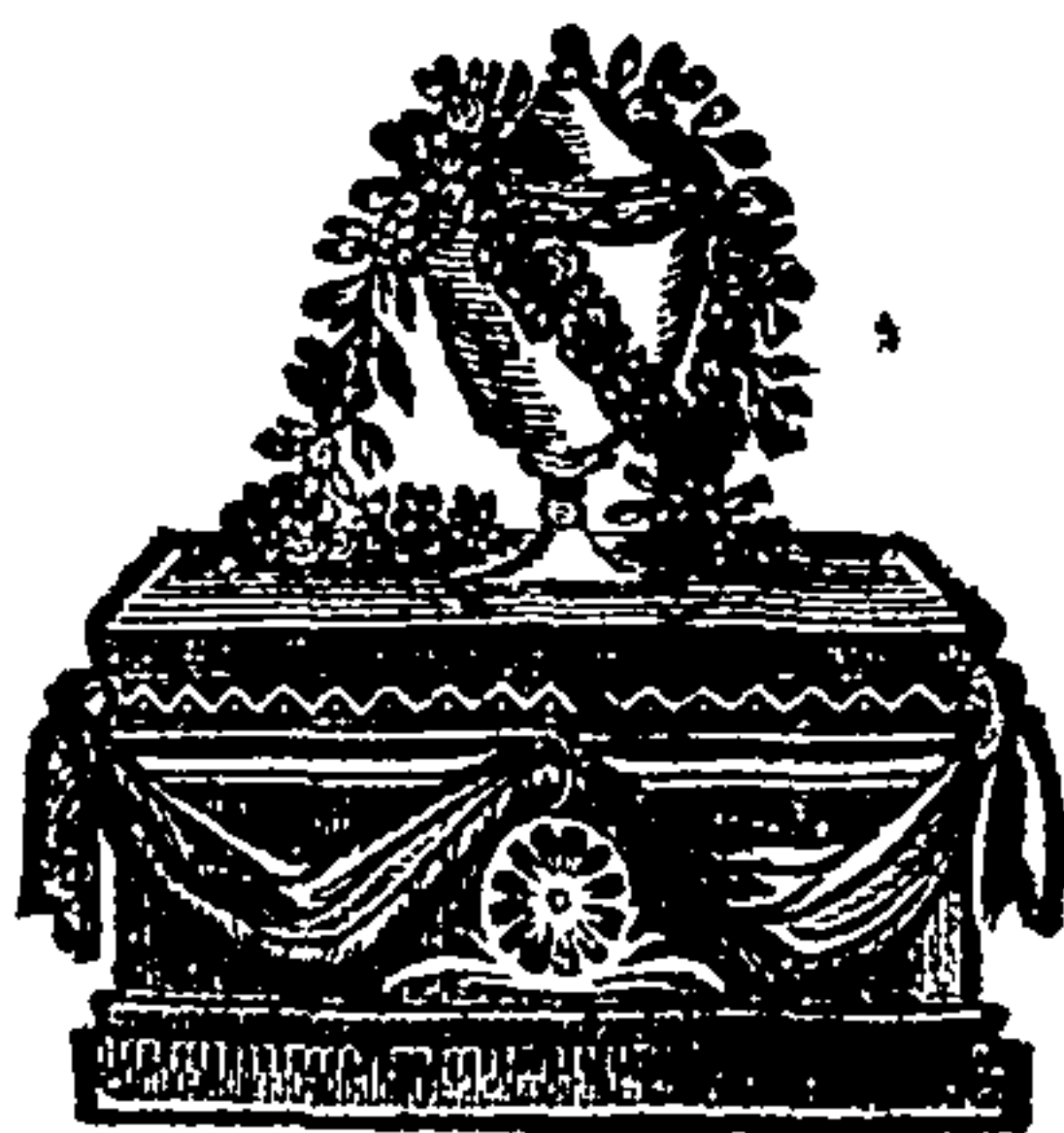
“ And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament,
and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and
ever.”

DAN. xii. 3.

“ Servant of God, well done, well hast thou fought
The better fight—

For this was all thy care
To stand approv'd in sight of God, though worlds
Judg'd thee perverse.”

MILTON.



BRISTOL:

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1797.

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S E R M O N.



ACTS XX. 24.

But none of these things move me, neither count I my Life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my Course with Joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.

WE have now an occasion, by the death and departure to glory of our much-loved and highly-revered Brother, to contemplate the character of a minister of Christ Jesus; of an instrument who is employed to turn men from the error of their ways into the paths of holiness, from the service of idols to worship the living and true God, in order that they may partake of his life, and live and reign with him to all eternity.

The greatness of this object, together with the energy required for prosecuting it, and the difficulty of accomplishing it, can only be counterbalanced by the assurance of deriving sufficient aid from above. The obstacles in the apostle's way were very great, verse 23. *The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.* But what are his sentiments on this trying series of distresses? Such as become the Christian Hero:—*But none of these things move me, neither*

count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy. Is this all? no :—This selfish object had not powers adequate to carry him through the projected difficulties, and therefore he couples with it the consideration, without which he could not have *finished his course with joy*;—viz. that he might also finish the *Ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus*. This was the darling object and grand desire of the Apostle, which exposed him to the most imminent dangers; and notwithstanding he foresaw that he should fall by the command of *Nero*, and end his race in blood, yet he rejoices to think *that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether it be by life or by death.*

The text necessarily induces us to take a view, (which we will in a summary way,)

First, Of the great difficulties attendant on a Christian Ministry.

Secondly, Of the Minister's support under them. And

Thirdly, I shall consider their particular application to our late Brother, whose remains lie before you.

And *First*. As we cannot more accurately state the difficulties than St. Paul himself, we will do it from his own enumeration of them—2 *Cor.* xi. 23. and in *Eph.* vi. 12. *We war not only against flesh and blood, but against those things and evil principles, which actuate them, against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* All persons cannot do all things, it is
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not every Preacher who has every one of these to encounter, though the great Apostle had. As he had to contend against *Principalities*, so the Minister whose sphere of labour is most narrow has to contend against some provincial, some parochial, some district or family idol, which lifts up its head as proudly as any imperial Dagon, against being brought into subjection to the obedience of Christ. The monopolizing farmer, the systematically overreaching tradesman or lawyer, in lower walks of life; in the higher ranks, the habitual gambler, the authorized oppressor of the poor, and the proud despiser of the meek and humble, the adulterer, the fornicator, the besotted drunkard; the Sadducees, Pharisees and Atheists, with many others, have each erected an usurped principality independant of God and Religion, and destructive to Man; and these principalities every one that preaches Christ, is bound to attack. And he must not expect to find them without *Powers* to support them, though each may have little strength by himself; though the drunkard may not be able to frame a syllogism for his defence; though the gambler may hesitate to say as the christian can and does, that he proceeds on a certainty, or though the monopolizer of the means of human subsistence may be loth in words to allow his being connected with the workers of iniquity, yet each will rush in to the aid of the other. There is a general alliance offensive and defensive among these petty principalities which is most rigidly adhered to; and no sooner is any one blocked up in his castle and unable to sally out, but the others lead out their powers in his defence and fall upon the christian assailant in flank and rear.

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These together are a confederate body, who sit as a cloud brooding general *darkness in the world* of which they are the *rulers*, and by their compact order and zealous aid to every weak part, shut out the light of the gospel, lest it should shine into their hearts. As the aggregate is considerable, it presents a very extensive field of military operation, and requires a large force capable of extending with effect in any direction, well supplied, strictly disciplined, and of undoubted courage, prudence, abilities and perseverance. The *high places* of the earth, as *courts* and *camps*, or the high places of religion, as *Pontificates* and their dependencies, are only so many powers that in all ages have opposed the true Ministers of Christ and their place is the darkness of this world. They will not come to the light nor admit the light to them, lest their deeds should be reproved. It is hard to attack *principalities*, difficult to stand our ground against their *powers*, almost hopeless to attack the usurped authority of anti-christ; but it requires courage indeed to form and conduct an attack upon these when they have not merely arrived at their high places, their strong ground; but are committing wickedness there, and not natural wickedness only, but *spiritual wickedness*, which announces the Spirit of Truth and *every thing that is called God* to be the immediate object of insult.

The Christian Minister finds it difficult to advance the divine life in the souls of those whom Providence has placed more immediately under his care; to make religion sway and prevail; to frame and mould their minds into conformity to the will of God, by enlightening the understanding, rectifying the will, and sanctifying the affections. Nothing below this should be our aim; neither
should

should we rest until this be accomplished. If any think this an easy work, let them try their skill on any person addicted to vice, and know for themselves if it be so. Persuade the drunkard to leave his cups, the covetous his hoards of gold, and the flaunting gallant to become serious. The bad examples, likewise, that enveigle our hearers greatly obstruct us :—We see them seldom ; but their companions often ; we bring them to some degree of sobriety for the time they are with us, but too soon it is worn off again by their wicked neighbours, who meet them every day, and by their bad example obliterate every good impression which the gospel has made on them. The foolish desires and hurtful tempers which they endeavour to hide from us, make the work of pious Ministers difficult. The Physician that attends to their health has all the advantage of us. When he enquires into the nature of their disorders, they are careful to give him all the information they can : but alas ! when the Physician of their souls, (under God) enquires after their particular vices, they are as careful to hide them : thus it becomes difficult to detect these and administer to them. The public exercise of the ministry hath its difficulty. This is a work many are fond of, and none more so than those least qualified for it. It is no small matter to accommodate ourselves to the capacity of our hearers ; so as not to disgust any by insipid flatness in our addresses, and to awaken and rouse drowsy souls, without terrifying tender consciences ; to bear home particular sins, without the appearances of personal reflection : in a word, to prove ourselves workmen that need not be ashamed. The discipline of Christian Societies is a farther exercise, and is a kind of edge tool ; and they need be wise who handle it. It is hard to manage the censures of the church with such prudence, that may
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neither encourage the flagitious sinners by remissness, nor tempt to anger others by needless severity ; nor give advantage to captious and troublesome men, for want of legal formality. But the most trying, is that of addressing ourselves to each person. This, to some bashful and humble minds is next to martyrdom. All which, considered in the aggregate, calls aloud for all possible circumspection, activity, and resolution, of which the Apostle was an exemplary instance. This leads us,

Secondly, To consider the support of Ministers under their difficulties.

That the Apostle had considerable support is plain, when he said, *None of these things move me!* No! not though you stand alone, and are confessedly sent as a sheep among wolves? then you cannot be acting on any earthly support, for all earthly powers are against you. You are singly in arms against a whole deluded and deluding world. You are mad, or else you are divinely supported from above! Such is the case with every Minister of Christ. *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ:* Such were the Apostle's weapons! And such the GOD that instructed and sustained him in the use of them! That he was not deserted at his need, nor deluded with vain promises of support, we have his own evidence for, which must be received on every rule as disinterested and competent, especially at a moment *when he was ready to be offered up, and the time of his departure was at hand.*

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I have fought a good fight : I have finished my course : I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

This Scripture suggests to us two specific views of the support, which the Apostle received. The first of these we also find in the text, and it is that Joy or satisfaction and delight of the mind being at rest in Jesus, which the Apostle experienced, and which awaited him in its fullness of fruition in the successful issue of his battles, toils, and labours, which being conformed to those of his Lord, and having obtained like precious faith with the saints of old, in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, gave him a title to Heaven, to enter his joy, and to sit down with him on his throne, even as he also had overcome and was set down with his Father on his throne. This is a powerful motive to exertion, and being a reward freely promised, may be claimed without presumption. For who is so fastidious to cavil with such a motive, when the Captain of our Salvation, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross ?

But the second specific view that supported the Apostle, was more grand, definite, and extended. He looked to the perfection of his work and glory in the re-appearing of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who should himself give him a crown of glory, and not as a king, who has 1
favourites, but as a JUDGE (Judge of his race); and who should *change his vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working*

whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Till this event, the consummate joy and glory of the Apostle remain incomplete. Having a full and general commission, he could indeed assail and shake spiritual wickedness in high places; the Diana of Ephesus, the Areopagus of Athens, the Sanhedrim of Jerusalem, with the whole counsel of Priests and Elders, the Synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyreneans, and Alexandrians, together with them of Cilicia, and of Asia, so that they were not able to withstand the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke; yea and Rome, the Capital of the world, where idolatry sat on the throne of emperors, marched at the head of armies, and commanded all that was worldly, wise, or mighty. And all the terrible *Massacres* and executions done by it, neither did nor could prevail against a cause designed to teach suffering, to be carried on by suffering, and lastly to conquer all by suffering. In a word, religion founded on the cross, cannot be suppressed by the cross.

Here it is proper to remark, what is perhaps more extraordinary, *none of these things moved him*; but he still looked for his crown from the Lord, the righteous Judge. O! the sublimity of the christian! in whose view, both the splendid magnanimity, and the persecuting malice of imperial Rome, alike vanished into empty air!

Other Ministers, I have observed, have less general commissions from above. And yet there requires an illimitable commission before the Gentile world is subdued. The Apostle was enabled to shake all the ramparts, but
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not allowed to take possession. Even principalities and powers were not all made subject to him. And it is evident in the present day, that so numerous are the enemies, so powerfully combined, and so audacious, that they laugh at every thing sacred and divine. Sometimes Christ's Ministers are jeered and pointed at, as so many fools and babblers. But why do not these profound rabbies, these oracles of reason among the modern philosophers, baffle and repel these upstart babblers, and crush their absurd doctrine in the bud? It is easier to contradict than confute. In fact, they are perpetually railed at as deceivers and impostors, even while they are undeceiving the world from the delusions that so universally bewitch it.

So rank is the foil of the world, that tares spring up under the very hands of the reapers. It is time, O God, to put forth thine hand! It is high time for the Lord of the vineyard to come, and miserably destroy the husbandmen that destroy the earth; to eradicate the spiritual wickedness in high places which has killed the Son, that the vineyard may be their own: and being POWERS, will yield to nothing but omnipotent POWER. Therefore the Son of Man shall come with power, and with great glory, as his holy Prophets have predicted, his Apostles have expected, and himself has promised. God will come in his chariot as a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire; to put down all his enemies; when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ; who will reign among his ancients gloriously for ever and ever.

Let us now, *Thirdly*, consider how far our deceased friend, in his sphere, followed the Apostle as he followed Christ.

And as I have slightly touched upon one of the best of characters, I shall crave your attention and patience, while I propose to your farther imitation, one of the greatest examples of this kind in our day ; I mean, that of our late friend, *Captain Webb*, who, being dead, yet lives, and ever will live in the memory of many here, and thousands besides. I do not intend to treat of him as is common in funeral *orations*. The history of his early part of life, may one day be drawn up by an abler hand. My work, at present, is to set him forth as a pattern of piety and true religion to MINISTERS and PEOPLE.

Capt. WEBB was in his younger days a very useful servant of the crown ; in which situation he received a wound in his arm, and lost his right eye in the same campaign that *General Wolfe* lost his life. He was always a man of moral character, and much respected in the army as an officer and a friend. From the earliest dawn of reason upon his mind, he had frequent convictions from *that light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world* ; his conscience accusing or excusing, according to his general conduct.

In the year 1764, being about forty years of age, it pleased that God who knoweth the heart of man, which in its natural state is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, to convince him by the power of his Spirit *alone*, of this important truth, deeply impressing his mind with his awful situation as a fallen creature. Not having any *spiritual* friend at this time to advise with, it pleased God, who had begun this blessed work, to lead him in a very remarkable way to the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins. He was frequently very much distressed,

distressed, almost to despair ; suffering grievously from the temptations of Satan, who often suggested to his mind, that there was no mercy for him, and tempted him to put an end to his existence. While under this temptation, in extreme agony of soul, he besought the Lord to seal his doom, or direct him to some comfortable passage of scripture ;* when, with a trembling hand, he opened the Bible, and cast his eye upon Isaiah liv. 7, 8. *For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee : In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.* He took great comfort from these words, and was singularly directed in a dream to a *Moravian Minister*, (a Mr. Cary) whom he met with on his way from London to Bristol, and whose person he knew as soon as he saw him, in consequence of his dream ; wherein also it had been suggested to him, that *that man would lead him to Christ*. As soon as they arrived in this city, he took an opportunity of opening his mind to Mr. Cary, who told him, he must lie at the feet of the Lamb, and be washed in his blood : giving him at the time an invitation, which he accepted, to hear him preach the next day. This was on March 23, 1765. While the Minister was speaking on the sufferings of Christ, and his love to mankind, it pleased the Lord to set before him the cross, and the Saviour of the world bearing his sins in his own body on it ; when, in a moment, his burden was removed, peace and joy through believing

* We do not wish to countenance the practice of converting the Bible into a Fortune-telling Book ; though we believe the Lord may often go out of his general way to meet the wishes of the simple enquirer after his will. Capt. WEBB, at this time, knew nothing of God's general dealings with his people, or with the plan of salvation.

believing filled his mind ; having, according to the language of the Homily of the Church of England, “a divine persuasion, or confidence, that all his sins were blotted out, and he reconciled to God by the merits of Christ ;” And, according to the language of scripture, Rom. v. 1. *Being justified by faith, he had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Soon after this, it pleased the Lord to strengthen him with repeated tokens of his favour ; giving him a full assurance of hope, that he should one day be with him in glory, which assurance he enjoyed to the day of his death, being more than thirty years.

He became acquainted with the Methodists through the late Rev. Mr. *Roquet* a few days after his conversion, who introduced him to the acquaintance of several pious people, among whom he found that spirit and experience which answered to his own, and which together with a divine impression on his mind, whereof he often spoke, determined him to live and die with those people.

The first time of his bearing a testimony of the truth was in Bath ; when the preacher not coming as was expected, he was desired to speak to the people, which he did, and gave an account of his own experience. This was all he knew about preaching at that time, and the people were much blessed.

Soon after this he had occasion to go to *America* in his military capacity, where he was appointed *Barrack-Master* of Albany. As soon as he arrived there he made a point of holding family prayer in his house, at which his neighbours frequently attended ; after a little while he ventured to give them a word of exhortation, and from the good effects that appeared

appeared in their conversion, he was encouraged to go farther still, even into the highways and hedges.

This star arose (for a star he was of no small magnitude, if that saying be true, that “he is the greatest preacher who converts the most sinners”) at a time when pleasure was extending her alluring voice to ensnare; when infidelity had almost overspread the land, and religion was hardly to be found. Unsupported by human aid; opposed by prejudice, and error widely prevalent; by interest and authority, wit and learning, in league to baffle his humble labours, he still succeeded.

This man (*of whom the world is not worthy*) from the love he bore to the souls of men, issued forth like lightning from one end of the land to the other, to bind up the broken hearted, and proclaim liberty to the captives. In one place we see him breaking forth like a mighty tempest, and thundering from mount Sinai upon the impenitent: In another place we behold him, like a benificent cloud, pouring the spirit of grace and consolation in copious streams upon the mourners in Zion.

“ Rich bleeding love his glowing tongue inspires,
Fills his rapt bosom with seraphic fires!
His heart elates! his noblest powers employs!
Augments his fervours, and improves his joys!”

He came not out among us, like the philosophical Divines of the day, to teach us to number the stars, to know their rounds, and to discover the secrets of nature; but to convince his fellow sinners of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; to teach us that the world passeth away
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and the fashion thereof; and that there is nothing more dangerous than forming an undue alliance with its customs and fading pleasures. He came not among us to instruct us in state affairs, and rules of civil policy, which is frequently nothing but the art of deceiving; but to discipline us for heaven. Though a soldier by profession, he came not to inspire us with the love of conquest and triumph, which animated the Alexanders and Cæsars of former times, and the heroes of the present age; but to conquer self, and to inflame our minds with the love of Jesus and eternal happiness.

The doctrines he taught, and for which he met the fiercest opposition, were the same that awakened the scorn and rage of the world ever since the beginning; and which many, who call themselves christians, oppose with all their zeal: such as, The Divinity of Christ, and the Holy Spirit; proving from the scriptures and other records, that they were one with the Father, whose glory is equal, whose majesty is co-eternal, and that the Church has always believed and maintained it. The *Holy Spirit* is not from himself as the *Father* is, for that being supposed, there would be more principles than one, consequently, more Gods than one, which is contrary to the whole tenor of the scriptures. The *Father* must be the first principle of all essence, the *Son* in the *Father*, and the *Holy Spirit* deriving his essence from both, and reproducing them in the world, and in the heart of man.

The doctrine of Free and Universal Grace. He believed and taught us that the grace of God was free for every man. *That Jesus Christ tasted death for every man*, and that in virtue of it, *a measure of grace was given to every man*

to profit withal, and consequently that man is free to choose or refuse. For if a man cannot do that which is lawful and right, he cannot do that which is unlawful and wrong: for what he seems to do is done in him and for him, either by irresistible depravity, or irresistible grace: a doctrine in opposition to sense and reason, and constant experience, which convinceth us that we have a power of acting and choosing. It can be no objection to this truth that according to the scripture we cannot please God without his assistance; for this is so far from being an objection, that it is a proof of our freedom to accept of such assistance and to concur with it. For as a Divine of the established church said, "*It must be a barbarism of language, to talk of assistance to a creature that hath no activity or power of its own; it is like a man talking of assisting a mere machine or a burthen that he takes up by main force.*"

The doctrine of the Sinner's Justification by Faith in Christ, without any respect to works, but such as proceed from that faith, and manifest it. This is the one only condition of our justification the gospel recommends, and from which we cannot be excused. *Thy faith hath saved thee: faith hath made thee whole*; and again, *O woman, great is thy faith*. Yet be it remembered, that she had first proved her faith by an *act* or *work* springing from it. In prayer the same condition is required;—*whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive*; again, *what things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them*. God requires faith because he hath given us abundant reason to credit his word. The light of nature (so called) discovers that God is good: The gospel represents him good and mer-

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ciful beyond all expression : most justly then he may require of us faith in his promises. Faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, is enjoined by the scriptures for our justification; because it is productive of the best effects, and is the forerunner and guardian of all graces. It suffers us not to be deceived by wordly hopes and fears, nor by wordly notions of right and wrong. It influences our conduct to seek God, when we believe that God is; and it is saying in our hearts and lives, that we acknowledge him to be all-knowing, wise, and good. *John iii. 33. He that believeth his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.* In a word, there is no other way of salvation. God is invisible. No man hath seen him, nor can see him. To faith only is it given to behold the throne “dark with excessive brightness,” and to discover the glorious perfections that fill it ! The principal reward is also like himself, invisible to the merely natural man : it lives in a distant region which no eye hath seen, no foot hath trodden; and before we take possession, we must leave *all* that the worldly-minded man counts his all, and beyond which he hath no views. To believe in Jesus Christ thus concealed ;—to confide in him as being good, merciful, and faithful, under all the inconveniences of life ; and to trust to a distant period for our reward, and to believe it so as to influence our conduct, is something more than human.

The New Birth, or Regeneration of Heart, and entire Sanctification of our Nature, was another of the truths of the gospel which he maintained ; a doctrine which is counted nonsense by some, and impossible to be attained, by others. Modern divinity has for the most part found a smother path to tread in, than that our worthy friend taught, and by which he himself was brought to the knowledge

knowledge of Jesus Christ. This is the man, (in connection with many other Ministers) that revived in our day the doctrine of Regeneration and Sanctification, when the poor doubtful enquirers after these truths were only entertained with ingenious essays on the beauty of virtue, the efficacy of benevolence, the dignity of the human mind, and other favourite topics; sanctification, or the kingly office of Christ to his church, he often observed with pain, was too much neglected by many that stile themselves the Ministers of Christ, who in order to extol his priestly office, degrade the princely dominion of his spirit in the heart. There cannot be a more dangerous or fatal delusion than to imagine, that any thing in Christ can avail for us, so as to bring us to heaven, unless we ourselves are actually created anew in Christ Jesus. The opinion of Christian perfection being unattainable in this life, has been begot and cherished by wild schemes of it. But he (from all that I could learn) never recommended to the church a fantastic or enthusiastic perfection; nor any heights of religion but what many actually feel and practice, by living as he did, unspotted by the pleasures, and unbroken by the troubles of this world; modest and serene, equal and heavenly minded in honour and dishonour, in want and abundance; in liberty, and in prison; in death, and in life.

The doctrine of Atonement was forcibly inculcated by him. Christ's Incarnation was his entrance into his office as Mediator; for before this there was no law given, but by the divine nature in the second person. Now the second person, as God, is not subject to, but coequal with God the Father. It was at Christ's free choice whether he would be incarnate, or not; for he that is under law is not at liberty to choose. Christ was under no law till he

became incarnate; he then, and not before, was a middle person, consequently became subject to his Father. Nor can we say Christ was Mediator, but as God and man. No doubt but his mediation availed for all that looked for his coming in the flesh; and with all those who believed in God according to the light of their dispensation, had its merciful virtue and effects, before he was born of his Mother *Mary*. Christ freely bound himself to fulfil all righteousness. He made himself amenable to the law of innocence as a creature, and was subject to it in the strictest sense :—to the law of *Moses* as a Jew, and therefore was obliged to be circumcised in obedience to that law. He bound himself to the law of Mediation as a Day's-man, to manage and transact all affairs between his Father and us sinners, in order to effect an everlasting union and fellowship.

The great work of Christ's Atonement I would state thus : First, that which respects God the Father, and was directed more immediately to him, is what holds forth Christ as our great High Priest, and one to whom alone the character of Priest belongs; for the true Church under the gospel, cannot with propriety acknowledge any other person under this character, as he only hath engaged in the work of atonement; and as such, all that he did with God and man, in the way of satisfaction and intercession, whereby he obtains grace and glory for sinners, respected God. Rom. iii. 25. Heb. ii. 17. The second part of his office is to subdue rebellious man, and bring him again into subjection and obedience to God. This Christ doth as a Prophet by his Spirit, Word, and Ministers, instructing him in his duty to God and man.—Acts iii. 22.—Phil. ii. 5.—1 John ii. 6.—1 Pet. ii. 21.—Heb. xii. 2. The third and last part of his office, is that of a King ;
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making such laws as we are to be judged by at last, and meanwhile governing us by them. *For God has set him as King upon his holy hill of Zion.* This takes in the government of the Churches, with all the gifts and offices that pertain thereto. Christ pleads with his Father for man, and through the virtue of his blood and righteousness, obtains mercy and salvation for him : and pleads with man by his word and spirit, which charge us not to refuse him that speaketh.—Heb. xii. 25. Christ also gives himself to God an offering for man.—Gal. i. 4.—Titus ii. 14.—Heb. viii. 3. And he obtains gifts of God for man.—Psalm lxviii. 18.—Heb. iv. 16.—ix. 24. *Who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification and Redemption,* (1 Cor. i. 30.) to the praise and glory of his grace ; God having set him forth a propitiation, through faith in his blood.

Time, in short, fails me to expatiate upon the doctrines of the Fall, of Repentance, of Rewards and Punishments, of a Final Judgment : all which he maintained for many years, with a christian-like fortitude and magnanimity. His abilities as a Minister lay principally in awakening poor sinners ; and he was mighty in faith and prayer.

The good qualities of this great man were not few. That he had his weaknesses, as most assuredly he had, none were more ready to acknowledge than himself. His charity was unbounded. There was nothing in the wide circle of his acquaintance, of a charitable kind, that came under his notice, but his mite was always ready. He made it his business to seek out the poor and needy ; he improved all opportunities of usefulness. He went to those who would
not

not, and to others who could not, come to him. The fatherless and widows lay near his heart. To these his actual charity was eminently distinguished.

To convince you how much he deserves our love and regard, it is sufficient to explain, in a few words, the effects which his labours have produced since he began his ministry. He was, under God, the first instrument of planting Methodism in America; and not satisfying himself with the success of his own labours in Philadelphia, New York, and other places, he stretched out his hands to the British Conference, and prayed them, "*Come over and help us.*" Ministers were accordingly sent from this country to America; and many were raised up among themselves, who are now mutually labouring to bring down *Antichrist*, to reduce sin, and to erect the Saviour's kingdom upon its ruins. By him many, but a degree from the brute, enemies to church and state, have learned *to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's*. Let us bring to mind what God has wrought for us, and for his Church among us, by this his servant, whose memory we now embalm with our tears. Has not the Angel of the Covenant, by him, brought many through the wilderness into friendship with us, and caused them to favour the things of the Spirit? He was the man that planted them in a well-ordered church, where they are quickened by God's grace through a lively and faithful ministry, where the gifts of Christ are watered by the powerful prayers of his saints, the preaching of his word, and the holy Sacraments; where many run to and fro that knowledge may be increased; and where discipline is for a wall and bulwark, and our hearts warmed by the communion of his saints. By his influence Preaching-houses were erected in New York, Philadelphia,

Philadelphia, and many other places in the wide continent of America ; and even this house (Portland-Chapel) he was the first and principal Agent in erecting.

O ! worthy man of God ! who is it that knew thee, and did not love thee ? Like fine gold, the more he was tried, the farther he enriched ; like the sea, the more he was observed, the more immense ; like the firmament, the more he was examined, the greater number of stars appeared. As gratitude abhors oblivion, and is a recording grace, keeping catalogues of favours ; so it is a reward to itself, and by these records it furnisheth the soul with matter for the sweetest employment and delights. O that I could raise your hearts in thankfulness to the bountiful Donor for so burning and so shining a light, who has now quitted the world to return to the bosom of God ! A river that has flowed back to its original source :—a sun past into another hemisphere. He is gone ! The happy spirit hath taken its flight ! He will not come to us, we may go to him. O highly favoured man, why art thou taken away in this unbelieving age ? when God is looked upon as an idle spectator, when infidelity prevails among all ranks ; when the religion of Jesus is turned and twisted to coincide with the Newtonian or any other philosophy, which may be the favourite system of the age, and when the sons of men are questioning the very existence of a God !

His Death, though sudden, was not unexpected by him : he has frequently told many of his approaching dissolution. And the last Sunday but one he stood near the communion table, under which we are now going to rest his peaceful remains, and shewed the place, and spoke of the manner of his burial, observing, “ I should prefer a triumphant death ;

death ; but I may be taken away suddenly. However, I now I am happy in the Lord, and shall be with him whenever he calls me hence, and that is sufficient."

A few weeks since, he preached his last sermon from this pulpit, in which he bore a testimony of the truth of the blessed gospel. His public prayers in this place were heard by many of you last Monday night, and you no doubt recollect his fervour of devotion. The next evening, about an hour before his departure, he prayed as usual with his family, and recommended them to God. After ten o'clock he retired to bed in his usual health, and soon after, taking leave of his beloved partner for the night, he observed that his breath was bad ; and in a few minutes, without a struggle or a groan, his happy spirit resigned its habitation, and fled to the realms of eternal day!

Having gone through, in a brief manner, the leading features of this extraordinary character ; his conversion and call to the ministry ; his first coming among us ; his breaking through the greatest difficulties ; his work ; his religious sentiments, and the leading doctrines which he taught ; his diligence and self-denial ; his great faith, zeal, and love ; his manner of preaching and usefulness, &c. you will bear with me while I attempt the most difficult task of all ; that is, to persuade both preachers and people to tread in his steps.

Pardon me, my friends, if any of you are inclined to think I have said too much of our greatly-esteemed Brother : impute it to my friendship and gratitude : for with him I have gone in and out among this people for many years.

years. Whatever you may think, my thoughts are that we cannot well say too much of him. "He was the wonder of many; a singular character :—the admiration, and worthy the imitation of all ;" as was said of the great and benevolent *Howard*. "Where is the man to be found fully qualified to satisfy his numerous friends? the utmost skill of the first masters of eloquence is required ; his grave should be strewed with the choicest flowers of oratory, and his memory embalmed in the richest and most pathetic language." Happy man! his days are ended, and he is now above the reach of temptation :—He is fled to those happy regions of light and joy, where there is no death, nor sorrow, nor crying, and where all tears are wiped from every eye. Should not the example of our deceased friend animate us that preach to others? who in the course of his labours cultivated a good understanding, and having grace in himself, obtained knowledge in divine things, and was thereby enabled to preach the word in a plain, obvious, and powerful manner. Let us follow him in the possession of true religion, in faith and love, in resisting the smiles of a bewitching, and the frowns of a censorious world. Let us attend to our duty, that as the eyes of the people are upon us, we may feed the numerous flocks committed to our care ; gather the lambs in our arms, and tenderly care for the young ; comfort Zion, build up her waste places, preserve the public peace, and keep the people in quietness and subjection to the authority set over us, that the Lord God may dwell among us, and delight to do us good.

All who knew the value of this great and good Man, must needs partake of the common sorrow which his death has occasioned : but what words can express the pier-

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cing grief of one, who is left, by so tender a Husband, in the solitary state of widowhood! and with what compassion should we address our prayers to the *Father of mercies*, to support her under this heavy stroke. Yet let not her mind utterly refuse to be comforted, since it ought to be counted a favour of divine Providence, to have been related to so valuable a person; and since it has pleased God, for the mitigation of her trouble, to give her the satisfaction of witnessing his christian behaviour in sickness and health, prosperity and adversity, and of hearing so often the gracious words which proceeded from him; so as to give her just reason to believe, his righteous soul is now happy, waiting for the resurrection of his body, while she has good hope, through grace, in a little time, to finish her course with joy, and enter into that rest which he has already attained.

A Father of the fatherless and Judge of the widow is God, in his holy habitation. When God sends his messenger death, and takes a dear beloved creature from our arms, the question is like that of our Lord to St. Peter, *Simon, lovest thou me?* Art thou willing to resign this thy companion and comfort at my call? Can you now practice what you have so often repeated in your closets, and in the sanctuary; “I am thine, Lord I am thine, all that I have is thine?” Or do you murmur and quarrel with his will and pleasure? What an astonishing proof of our sincerity is this, when with Abraham we can and do take our only Son Isaac at God’s command and offer him up unto death! Your Husband has forsaken you in your sorrowful moments, and has left you and your dear children to mourn alone; he forsook you while drowned in tears, and overwhelmed in heart, and now can give you no more consolation. Our fathers where are they? our prophets
our

our teachers, our guides, they are gone! O then let this lead you from the world, now your earthly comforts and dependance are so much diminished, let it lead you to a solid dependance upon God, your only and abiding friend, one that will stick closer than a brother.

Is the Society in grief because of losing their companion and friend?

Your aged Minister is gone, to return no more till the second coming of our Lord. What can you do better than to live and die as he did? You will see his tears, and hear his voice no more! This pulpit is never more to be honoured by him! His steadiness and indefatigableness will no more correct your indolence, nor his holy practice reprove your sins. No: he is gone to the world of spirits, and his clay we shall soon consign to the tomb! O! bring to mind his extraordinary humility, his hearty friendship towards his equals, his condescension to his inferiors, his unbounded charity to the poor, his readiness to forgive, his zeal for truth, his loyalty to his Prince, his attachment to the people he was united to, his universal love to all. Think what there is in this world that should make you fond of it. What is it but a land of shades, of griefs and trouble; where one dear friend after another is ravished out of our arms! Happy Christian, who walked with God to the end of his days, and when he died left a perfumed name behind him, and thousands to call him blessed! Such is the example this renowned champion of the cross has left us, and such we have yet living among us, besides those that have departed in the faith of Christ; and not a few in this place, the brightness and favour of whose name abide to this day among us as ornaments to religion.

ligion, and as a rich perfume to the gospel still preached and lived by many. And as there are many under divine impressions, who feel the drawings from above, who are enquiring after salvation, and who in the simplicity of their hearts mark the lives of those that profess to walk by the leadings of the Spirit; what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Let no part of your conduct be contradictory to the truth which he taught you, nor a stumbling-block in the way of the sincere enquirers.

Under your present circumstances, you should heartily pray for a continuance of the gospel, that you may receive spiritual improvement. You should walk worthy of your calling, labouring to be more useful, exhorting one another daily: considering the weakness of your nature, the purity and presence of God, the strictness and impartiality of a judgment to come, the importance of eternal happiness, and of its awful reverse, eternal misery! My hearty prayer to God is, that the removal of our dear Brother from this Church to the Church above, may be a lasting blessing to those who were his companions of late years; so as to fill up his place, having the cause and interest of our Redeemer near their heart; praying earnestly to God to bless the rising generation; to strengthen them in running the race that is set before them; to wait meekly and humbly before the Lord to whom they have resigned themselves; to be of good courage, hoping in God, who will be their strength and support in the evil day.

To you, my friends, that have attended his ministry of late years, but have not ventured to give him the right hand of church-fellowship, he still lifts up his voice and
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cries, *Is it nothing to you that the Saviour should die?* Consider seriously and frequently how soon the fashion and grandeur of this world passeth away. He that looketh for, and hasteneth unto the coming of the day of God, will have no great relish for the honors and pleasures of this life; nor will he be slothful or remiss, but in timely preparation for it, will lay out the strength and vigour of his mind; retrenching his needless expences, denying his pleasures, and will be content to be counted obscure, mean, and contemptible. O! watch against the fickleness and infirmity of your fallen nature, by which you have so often miscarried: consider well the blest reward that awaits the righteous in another world. Be steadfast in that faith and hope which wait and long for the coming of our Lord. This will invite you often to take a view of Canaan, to fill your mind with the beauties and realities of eternity—the security of its rest—the transport of its joys—the love of Jesus—the crowns of glory—the felicity of angels—the perfection of saints—the fruit of the tree of life, and the streams that water the paradise of God. Such like thoughts may be useful to wean you from the world, self, and sin, to upbraid your laziness, and incline you to hear the words of Jesus sounding in your ears, *What, can you not watch with me one hour?*—or those words to the Church of Laodicea, *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also have overcome and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

Finally, my brethren, the call is to all. Let us, therefore, lay aside all our little differences of opinion, all animosities, and let us unite in the common cause of Christ. Let us bear up, in the strength of our common Lord and Saviour, against all adverse fortune, so that the darkest dispensations

dispensations may prove occasions for our graces to shine forth and illumine them. *Take the Prophets for an example of suffering affliction and patience.* The greatest saints have had their trials in the way to heaven; and all is consistent with the love of our heavenly Father, and the relation which we bear to him. God knows what he hath to do, and the part we are to act, and what will be most conducive to our safety in the way to heaven. *Affliction cometh not from the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground. I formed the light, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things.* Resign yourselves to God, as having an unquestionable dominion over you. *Behold he taketh away, who can hinder? who can say to him what dost thou?* If God's glory is promoted by it, why should we be dissatisfied? It was upon this ground David was dumb, and opened not his mouth, because the Lord did it. *It is far less than our iniquities deserve. Let us then bear the indignation of the Lord, because we have sinned against him.* Consider, there is no defence against death, nor any way to escape it. *There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit, neither hath he power in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that war.* No wealth can bribe, nor eloquence persuade, nor cries, nor tears can move. *Riches profit not in the day of wrath.* The strongest gates, castles or guards are no security. Not the eloquent orator, not the skilful physician, not the mighty warrior, can hold a soul in life. Improve then your short and uncertain day; for if you are once turned off this stage of action, you cannot re-enter to add what was omitted, nor rectify what is amiss. What grace you have to get, must be got now. Pardon of sin, peace of conscience, reconciliation with God, the mortification of your corruptions, and renovation of your nature;

nature; in short, whatever is necessary for your eternal welfare, now is the time to obtain it, for, now is the day of salvation! Let us look up therefore to the heavenly Jerusalem as real, great, and glorious, for our suffering time will soon be over, our complaints removed, our graces made perfect, and our warfare accomplished, the body of death put off with our body of flesh, all tears wiped from every eye, and joys begin which shall endure for ever. Amen, and Amen.



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